

Inside

Reader feedback
"I cuddle up with my wife at home," is how Baumholder's Pfc. Antonio Wheeler said he deals with the dark days of winter in Germany. See page 2 for more reader feedback.



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Communities gear up to celebrate annual showdown of National Football League teams. See page 14.



Parent-teacher conferences
Policy encourages parents to play active role in children's education. See page 26.



Herald Union



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Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

Feb. 1, 2005

On the way to Afghanistan

26th Quartermaster deploys to support Enduring Freedom

By David Ruderman and Karl Weisel
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

"Make your mothers proud."

Those were among the parting words Lt. Col. Paul D. Brown, 485th Corps Support Battalion commander, had for members of the 26th Quartermaster Supply Company as they boarded buses in the pre-dawn darkness at Hanau's Hutier Kaserne Jan. 19. The Soldiers were on their way to Afghanistan where they are expected to serve for the next year to support Operation Enduring Freedom 6.

While a few family members and friends were on hand at 5:30 a.m. to say good-bye, many more attended a deployment ceremony conducted by the company's higher headquarters, the 485th CSB and 16th Corps Support Group, the day before in Hanau's Cardwell Fitness Center.

"For most of them it's not been a year since returning from the war in Iraq, but again our nation has



Photo by Karl Weisel

Friends and families bid farewell as members of the 26th Quartermaster Supply Company prepare to board buses in the early morning darkness at Hanau's Hutier Kaserne Jan. 19.

called upon them," said Brown, who spoke to the assembled Soldiers and their guests.

"The sacrifices these Soldiers make are clearly defined in the faces of their families. This is the bill we pay for freedom in the world we live

in," he said.

"It is about service to the nation provided by these Soldiers and families," Brown said.

Brown said that Family Readiness Groups, the company, battalion and group rear detachment

units, and the other support agencies would not let the families fold down, "while these Soldiers work for freedom. The many community support agencies here in Hanau are experienced and ca-

See Afghanistan on page 3

Most recent blaze in Bad Nauheim

Unattended cooking cause of most housing fires

By Karl Weisel
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

A fire in Bad Nauheim's Alvin York Village Jan. 13 once again underscored the vital importance of never leaving cooking unattended. The kitchen fire, which caused about \$3,000 in damages, started when grease caught fire in an unattended frying pan, according to Helmar Kuhn, chief of Fire and Emergency Services for the 104th Area Support Group.

"We are concerned about kitchen fires in general," said Kuhn. "They shouldn't happen — they can be avoided."

"Out of 35 fires in housing in the

104th Area Support Group in fiscal year 2004, 13 were the result of unattended cooking," he said. Of the other fires in housing areas of the 104th ASG, eight were the result of children playing with matches, seven were caused by such things as unattended candles, four were electrical mishaps, two were caused by arson and one was a careless act (leaving hot wax unattended on the stove).

"Sometimes there may be a malfunction of equipment which can't be helped, but in most cases fires are started when cooking, candles or something else is left unattended," said Kuhn. "The magic

See Fires on page 4



Photo courtesy of 104th ASG's Fire and Emergency Services
Out of 35 fires in 104th ASG Army housing in fiscal year 2004, 13 were a result of unattended cooking, according to fire officials.

News flash

Fuel price falls

Army and Air Force Exchange Service officials announced that the price of fuel at pumps in Germany will decrease Feb. 1. In Germany the AAFES price for normal unleaded fuel will drop from \$2.046 to \$1.974 per gallon. The price for super unleaded will go from \$2.151 to \$2.075 per gallon. Super plus decreases from \$2.248 to \$2.175 and diesel will go from \$2.208 to \$2.125 per gallon. AAFES officials remind customers that the Germany/Netherlands Series 5 POL gas coupons with an expiration date of Sept. 30, 2004, will be extended for acceptance at AAFES gas stations through April 30, 2005. However gas stations on the economy will only accept the Series 6 POL coupons currently for sale at AAFES facilities with an expiration date of Sept. 30, 2005. Customers can request refunds for unused coupons, as long as they are still attached to the original booklet, at any AAFES facility until Sept. 30, 2005. (AAFES-E Public Affairs)

VA home loan program

Legislation signed recently by President George Bush makes home ownership more affordable for veterans. Changes under the law mean veterans will be able to get no-downpayment loans of up to \$359,700. The previous ceiling was \$240,000. Veterans Affairs-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing part of the loan, veterans can get a good interest rate without having to make a downpayment, officials said. The changes are part of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004. For more information on VA home loan benefits visit www.homeloans.va.gov on the Internet. (Veterans Affairs Release)



Commentary

Feedback: *How do you cope with the dark days of winter in Germany?*



Sgt. Maurice Rankin
Headquarters and Headquarters Company,
104th Area Support Group, Hanau

"I put on extra layers of clothing to keep warm and hydrate myself really well. I go through two pots of coffee a day."



Thersina Hope
Baumholder family member

"Just like any other winter at home — I go outside and play in the snow."



Spc. Joseph Webb
Battery C, 2nd Battalion,
3rd Field Artillery, Giessen

"I stay in my room and watch a movie. Sometimes I take the train to Cologne. I like it there."



Mary Ferguson
104th Area Support Group Health Promotions
coordinator, Hanau

"Travel. Get around and enjoy all Europe has to offer — Paris, particularly. We go every month. We've been to every EU country there is since we've been here."



Sonja Tucker
284th Base Support Battalion, Giessen

"My husband and I go skiing when we have time. Instead of going to the gym, I work out at home and do Pilates. And we watch movies when it is too cold and dark to go outside."

Bell sends: Help prevent more Soldiers from dying in winter car crashes

By Gen. B.B. Bell
U.S. Army Europe commander



Last Tuesday was ugly in Germany. Snow, freezing rain, slush and ice created some of the worst driving conditions we have seen so far this winter. These conditions contributed to many vehicle crashes that day, one of which claimed the life of a U.S. Army Europe Soldier. He was killed when he lost control of his vehicle and crossed the center line into the path of an oncoming 40-ton truck. At the time, road conditions were Amber.

"Black ice" may have been a factor in this crash. Black ice is a thin, extremely slick layer of ice on the road. Because it is so thin, it is essentially invisible and looks as black as the road. It also tends to make the road look wet instead of icy. Drivers who hit a patch of black ice may unexpectedly be unable to brake or steer their vehicle and suddenly find themselves in danger of skidding out of control.

Over the last several years, many USAREUR personnel have been injured or killed in car crashes during winter. Many of these crashes could have been prevented if the drivers had assessed the risks involved with their travel and modified their plans and behavior accordingly. We must take steps to prevent these tragedies.

✧ I ask all of you to reaffirm your commitment to safety by reviewing and ensuring you understand the hazards associated with winter driving. These hazards are explained in our Winter Safety Campaign, which is available on the USAREUR home page. Following the guidance in the Winter Safety Campaign will help us avoid injuries and loss of life this winter.

✧ BSB commanders are responsible for determining and announcing road conditions for their geographic areas of responsibility. Unit commanders are responsible for assessing the risks associated with those road con-

ditions and assigning missions accordingly by using sound risk-management techniques. Commanders must ensure that their personnel do not take unnecessary risks, whether they are driving an Army motor vehicle or a privately owned vehicle, especially during bad weather. USAREUR Regulation 385-55, Appendix I, defines road conditions for the Army in Europe. Commanders who are not familiar with these conditions and the procedures for responding to them need to review the regulation.

✧ Leaders and supervisors must identify personnel in their unit who lack winter-driving experience and do whatever it takes to prepare them for the risks of the road. Sponsors must do the same thing with their family members. Leaders, supervisors and sponsors who do not have experience in winter driving must ask for guidance.

✧ Leaders and supervisors must also talk with subordinates about their personal appointments or plans, and help them change their appointments or modify their plans if the risks involved are too great. These discussions are not an invasion of privacy, they are a show of respect and commitment to the well-being of the individual and to mission readiness.

✧ Commanders who decide to release their personnel early based on worsening weather conditions must take time to remind them of the dangers they will face on their way home. These individuals need to understand the dangers of winter driving when the weather is bad. Hearing about it in a routine safety briefing is not good enough.

✧ Ensure that this safety alert is given the widest possible distribution by forwarding it electronically and posting it on unit bulletin boards. Commitment to safety and knowledge of winter-driving techniques will get us safely through the winter, fully mission capable and ready to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere.

Letter to the editor: Keller Theater kudos

Editor's note: The following letter was sent by members of Die Brücke, the German-American Club of Giessen/Wetzlar, to thank the Giessen community for allowing them access to the Keller Theater over the years.

Thank you for allowing us to be your guests during the last 10 years. These rooms here are more for us than just a bar. These rooms are a bridge between the families of our two countries. Here we meet each other, learn from the different cultures, have a good time and enjoy good food and drinks, and always a very friendly service team. The goal of our

club is very simply stated: to enhance German-American relations. Relationships with German and American families, visits to theaters, tours of historic towns and sites, monthly meetings, student exchanges, youth exchanges and our special events here in your theater: the Oktoberfest, Thanksgiving dinner, annual Advent coffee with Christmas carols and, not to forget — very good shows in the theater upstairs. For us it's like a living room and makes us feel at home. Thanks again for all the good times here.

Klaus Leske, Die Brücke president

Herald Union

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News and features

Job opportunities abound in child care field

Care givers needed throughout the ASG

By Karl Weisel

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Child care officials across the 104th Area Support Group are calling on people interested in getting paid to improve child development skills, playing a vital role in young people's lives and starting a highly rewarding career.

"The sky is the limit to what you can do in the child care career field," said Celia Kandler, Child and Youth Services director for the 104th Area Support Group. "Staff members get a chance to work with children and receive child development training on the job. For someone who has a high school diploma it's a good steppingstone into a professional organization."

"We are in big need of employees," said Serap Fern, Argonner Child Development Center director. "Because of high turnovers due to moves and deployments, we are always losing people. It's hard to anticipate how many people we will need. When an employee's husband deploys, the employee may have to stay home with her children or there may be other factors such as Permanent Change of Station moves."

"For people who want to invest in early childhood development, this is a wonderful experience," said Fern. "The Army invests in their training. This job offers a future to employees who are interested in investing some time in early childhood development."

As care givers gain skills through training they are eligible for higher salaries which



Photo by Karl Weisel

Vanessa Hanson (left) and Serap Fern work with children in the Argonner Child Development Center's Infant Room. Child care officials said CDC jobs are a great opportunity for people to gain valuable training while earning a salary.

could eventually lead to management positions, Fern added. "Also we are flexible with our employees who are taking college classes, because we are interested in them gaining more education."

"Even if you don't yet have children, this job has the added benefit of helping you learn how to raise your own children. It gives you skills which are good for any parent," said Fern.

"The hours are also a lot better than some other organizations have, such as working at the PX or commissary because we are closed

on weekends and holidays," she said.

Staff members with children get a 20 percent discount if their own children are enrolled in the child care center. "At the same time you are working, you will be able to see your child and spend some quality time with him or her during your lunch break," Fern said.

With children on waiting lists for child care in several communities and rooms closed in several CDCs, Kandler said the need is particularly great at this time.

"Across the ASG we have rooms closed

because of the shortage of care givers. We have 428 children on waiting lists," she said.

"We had staff who left both before, during and after the deployment. Some people were just not willing to start working right before their spouses came home from Iraq," Kandler said.

While there is a shortage now, the CDCs received plenty of outside help during the over a year long deployment of 1st Armored Division Soldiers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "Throughout the deployment we had Child and Youth Services staff come over from Fort Hood and Fort Sill, one staff member come from Vicenza, Italy, and 66 interns from the University of Iowa," she said. "During the deployment between 71 and 82 percent of our CDC staff had husbands deployed."

A shortage in Family Child Care providers is also a concern. "We're also looking for FCC providers," Kandler said. "We've got 17 currently in training and in two weeks we'll be up to 90 providers, but we're still looking to increase that number to get up to pre-deployment levels."

In the meantime CYS officials are encouraging anyone with an interest in children, developing new skills and starting a new career while earning a salary to apply.

"This is a great opportunity," said Kandler. "There's upward mobility. We provide the training and in-house training is transferable for college credits."

For more information about CDC and FCC jobs contact your local Child Development Center, CYS or visit the 104th ASG home page at www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil and click on "Employment" under the "Newcomers" link.

Afghanistan

Continued from page 1
pable," he said.

Every Thursday over the last 10 months has been devoted to honing 26th QMS Soldiers' combat support and warfighting skills, said Brown. "That field training proved that our junior leaders are ready to carry out their mission anytime, anywhere. These Soldiers were truly impressive and well led. I'm 100

percent confident that this company is ready to go to Afghanistan and provide combat support services. They are superior at providing fuel support and exceptional at delivering water supply support.

"Since Thanksgiving this company has been on a fast track. They accept nothing but the highest standard of performance. These are the best men and women our nation has

to offer. They are here because they chose to serve their nation, and we are here to serve you. We will await your safe return. Godspeed and good luck," he said.

While many of the unit's Soldiers are veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan will pose another set of challenges, said Soldiers and their leaders.

"It's going to be different," said Capt. Kristopher Pabotoy, 26th QMS commander. "We'll have multi-locations, four locations. Each of my Soldiers will have a forward support command."

"I think we're more prepared this time," said Spc. Quinton Williams, a veteran of the Iraq deployment. "It was a little scary the first time we deployed — we didn't know what we were getting into. This time I feel more comfortable."

"But Soldiers still have to stay on their toes," he said. "I tell my fellow Soldiers to always keep their eyes open."

Veterans of the Iraq deployment helped the new Soldiers prepare for

the Afghanistan mission, he said. "We take care of them," said Williams. "We make sure they're ready and take their training very seriously. We tell them to pay attention to what their first sergeant tells them."

"I'd say 90 percent of the NCOs that are going downrange have been there before," said Sgt. Erin Swartzlander, a 26th QMS Iraq veteran. "It makes it a stronger unit, but Afghanistan is different than Iraq; it's a different situation."

Training for the mission reflected those differences, she said.

"We might still be doing road missions, there might be some travel, but most of the training was land-based, trying to get them to concentrate on that."

All the Soldiers who went downrange last time are really open to answering questions, just giving them the mindset of what it's like. It was something not everyone's done before. The Soldiers who were in Iraq are somewhat used to it, but it's good for the new Soldiers to go

through it before we go down there, to kind of know what to expect."

"They're motivated. That's the most important thing," said 1st Sgt. Amy Hendricks. "The 26th is ready to go."

While coping with separation is always challenging, this time will be easier in some ways, said Natalie Rau, Pabotoy's significant other.

"It was very hard when he went to Iraq. Especially the first months were difficult, but you learn to handle it," she said. "This time I know that he can call me with better communication facilities available. That makes it easier — knowing what's going on."

"I feel I'm making a big difference in the world," said Williams. "I went home on leave a little while ago and people back home let me know that they're proud of what we're doing. It makes you feel good about making a difference."

"Just be proud as a Soldier. We're here to represent not just the families, but the American people," said Pabotoy.



Photo by Karl Weisel

Soldiers salute during a deployment farewell ceremony Jan. 18.

News and features

News flash

NTV fuel key misuse

Officials report that some Non-Tactical Vehicle users are misusing or abusing NTV fuel keys at Transportation Motor Pool fuel pumps. See page 17 of this issue for details in "Did you know?"

Credit union matches tsunami relief donations

Andrews Federal Credit Union will match all donations to the Tsunami Relief Fund during 2005. Stop in to any AFCU branch to make a donation. Visit www.andrewsfcu.org for branch locations. (AFCU Release)

1st Armored Division's 3rd Brigade earns prestigious honor

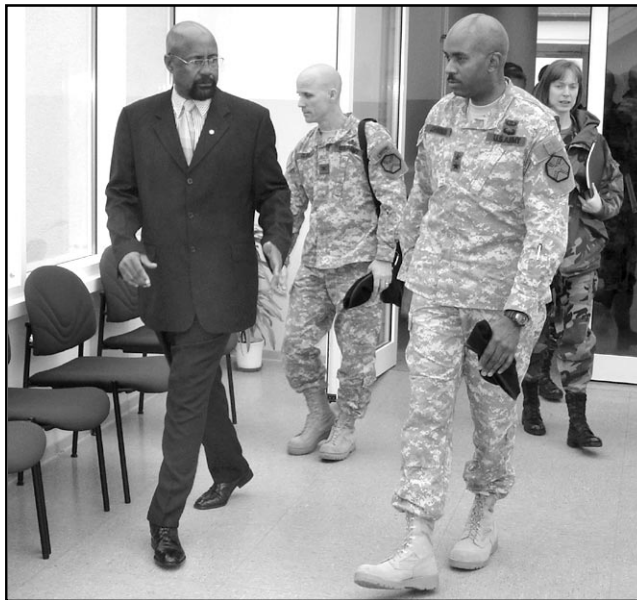
The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Riley, Kansas, received the Valorous Unit Award Jan. 21, just before the brigade returns to Iraq. The Secretary of the Army bestows the award for heroism in action against an armed enemy of the United States. To receive the award a unit must display such gallantry, determination and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart and above other units participating in the same campaign. "We served together in Iraq in most historic of times," said Brig. Gen. Michael Tucker, 1st Armored Division's assistant division commander for maneuvers. "Quite simply, the Bulldogs helped bring the city of Baghdad back to life ... The nation is fortunate to have the Bulldogs' service." The award is rarely given to a unit larger than a battalion, officials said. (ARNEWS)

Monthly Praise Fest

The Fliegerhorst Contemporary Service hosts a community Praise Fest Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. at the Fliegerhorst Chapel on Fliegerhorst Kaserne. Praise Fest is held the first Sunday of the month. It is an inter-denominational event featuring contemporary style Christian music. Child watch care is available for children through age 3. Call Chaplain (Maj.) Arley Longworth at mil 322-9609 or civ (06181) 88-9609 for details.

Tour extensions for civilians

All civilian employees who entered on active duty and took military leave or leave without pay from their civilian positions will have their overseas tour dates administratively extended for the equivalent of the entire period they served on active duty upon returning to work. Tour dates include both current tour end date and, if the employees had not worked overseas for five years before entering on active duty, the five-year tour date. If civilian employees entered on active duty to participate in contingency operations for a period of 180 days or more, and their adjusted current tour end date is less than 18 months from the date they returned to work, an additional adjustment will be made to extend the tour end date to 18 months from the date of return to civilian duty. The extension will ensure employees have at least one year before they have to either register in the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program or inform their servicing Civilian Personnel Advisory Center that they plan on exercising their re-employment rights to a position in the continental United States. It will also provide management sufficient time to determine if they wish to extend the employee's overseas tour. For more information refer to Army in Europe Pamphlet 690-14, Guide for Appropriated Fund Civilian Employees Who Perform Active Military Duty, available online at <https://www.aeaim.hq.usareur.army.mil/library/pam/index-aep.shtm>. (Civilian Personnel Directorate Release)



IMA chief visits Hanau

Hanau Central Processing Facility manager Larry Bostick escorts Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Johnson, Installation Management Agency commander, on a tour of the Consolidated Processing Center on Pioneer Kaserne Jan. 27. The IMA chief met with 104th Area Support Group and base support battalion leaders at Yorkhof Kaserne for an update, was briefed on the BOS GmbH Total Maintenance Contract at the company's office on Grossauheim Kaserne and addressed the civilian work force and Soldiers at the Evening Star Theater on the current status of IMA's development and Standard Garrison Organization. See the Feb. 15 issue of the *Herald Union* for an in-depth report on Johnson's vision for IMA.

Photo by David Ruderman

Hanau Commissary among best

By Gerri Young

Defense Commissary Agency Public Affairs Office

The Hanau Commissary was among five stores worldwide out of a total of 272 commissaries to make the cut in the annual Best Commissary Awards program conducted by the Defense Commissary Agency. The competition targets a best large and a best small commissary in the United States and overseas areas, and a best superstore in the United States.

As DeCA Europe's nominees, Hanau (best large) and Livorno (best small) met several stringent measures: all departments are within allowable tolerances; stores met or exceeded target levels for unit costs; and the annual customer satisfaction survey results were above average.

The Hanau Commissary has a staff of 91 U.S. and local national employees and is responsible for two annexes, Gelnhausen and Büdingen. Hanau has the following previous awards to its credit: Best Large Store Zone 31 — 2002,

2003; Best Large Store Merchandising Zone 31 — 2002, 2003; Best Large Store Merchandising DeCA — 2003; Director's Blue Ribbon Award — 2003.

The Hanau Commissary does approximately \$15.6 million in business yearly and carries over 10,000 line items.

Riccardo Lieffort has been the Hanau store director since 2001. He previously served as store director for commissaries at Aviano, Vicenza, and Livorno, Italy, and Staten Island, N.Y.

Michael Dowling, DeCA Europe director, considers this competition the most important of the year.

"Every store would like to have a best large or best small commissary trophy in their trophy case," said Dowling. "The competition is tough and requires many long hours to meet the basic business criteria and to pass the careful inspections. This year the competition is going by new and tougher rules, so a win at either Hanau or Livorno will be especially

Fires

Continued from page 1

word to me is 'unattended' whether it's cooking, candles or anything else — people must not leave them unattended.

"While cases occasionally arise where you are distracted — say to answer the telephone or a knock at the door — make sure to turn off the stove before leaving the kitchen," Kuhn said. "And if you simply can't avoid leaving your cooking unattended momentarily, always take along something to remind you of the cooking. Take a spoon or something similar to remind you that you have cooking on the stove when answering the phone."

Good housekeeping also helps improve everyone's chances of preventing fires. "Almost no one cleans cooking equipment such as exhaust hoods over stoves properly. Improved housekeeping can help residents reduce fires," said Kuhn.

Another safety tip is to wear the appropriate clothing when cooking. "Avoid wearing loose clothing or having open hair while around open-flame appliances or hot surfaces. Also always turn off hot plates when not in use," he said. Unplugging electrical appliances when not in use is also recommended.

Candles are forbidden in housing, he added. According to the Fire and Emergency Management Standard Operating Procedures, "The use of open flame candles is prohibited in all community facilities with the following exceptions: Community chapels during religious services; places of public assembly on special occasions and with BSB commander permission. Such candles must be located on substantial non-combustible surfaces, and be located where there is no danger of ignition of combustible materials. Candle flames

must be protected from drafts and air currents by hurricane globes or similar devices. Open flame candles on Christmas or other holiday celebration trees are strictly prohibited."

Despite the number of fires in housing in the past year, the good news is that no one was killed or seriously injured. "That's most due to quick fire department response. Most housing residents have learned how to respond in the case of a fire — to close doors, get out quickly and call the fire department from a neighbor's apartment," Kuhn said. "If the fire department responds quickly, damages will be much lower."

One of the reasons for fewer serious blazes in Army housing is the availability of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and in some cases, sprinkler systems, Kuhn said. "Since 2001 when Congress mandated fire extinguishers by public law in each stairwell of family housing we've had fewer serious fires. The public law also mandated that new family housing and units undergoing major renovation be fully equipped with fire suppression sprinkler systems, and IMA-Europe has an ongoing program replacing coil type kitchen stoves with heat limiting stoves," he said. "The Department of Defense by mandating this, as a whole, is providing maximum protection for U.S. Army Soldiers and their families."

"We recommend that residents check their smoke detectors monthly," he said, adding that this is easily done by pushing a button on the apparatus.

For more fire safety tips call your Garrison Fire Department anytime of the day or night including weekends and holidays at: 221st BSB Fire Department mil 337-5315/5883; 222nd BSB Fire Department mil 485-7572/8689; 284th BSB Fire Department mil 343-7770/8388; 414th BSB Fire Department mil 322-7779/7496.

Parents get chance to show kids real world

By Cassandra Kardeke
*221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office*

The groundhog won't be the only one looking for a shadow Feb. 2 as many parents will have shadows of their own this Groundhog Day.

Each year Department of Defense Dependents Schools and the 221st Base Support Battalion work together to promote Groundhog Job

Shadow Day giving children a closer look at what Mom and Dad do at work all day.

"Last year was a bit low key due to the deployments, but we are expecting the event to be a big success this year," said Peter Witmer, 221st BSB school liaison officer. Despite last year's low turnout, hundreds of students have participated in the event over the past few years.

"This is a good program for both the parent and the child," said Lt. Col. Christopher Franks, 221st BSB commander. "Children get a better understanding of what their parents do and a chance to see what the real world is all about."

Parents expecting a "shadow" should coordinate with their supervisor and contact their child's school in advance if participating. If the work schedule doesn't accommodate a "shadow," parents can opt to have their child shadow a mentor or other individual.

"Sometimes Mom or Dad's workplace isn't really the place for kids, but parents can arrange with a friend or other adult to give their child the experience," said Witmer.

For more information or to mentor a student call your local school or Witmer at mil 337-5129 or civ (0611)705-5129.



Photo by Cassandra Kardeke
Jessica Amerans checks a Soldier's blood pressure while participating in Groundhog Job Shadow Day in 2003.